

The Prince George's Post



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CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY HANNAH KLARNER

Cardboard boxes filled with supplies are stacked on the loading dock of the Prince George's County Department of Social Services to be packed in vans for the Point In Time Count on January 25, 2017. The boxes contained outerwear, water, and food to be given away to homeless people encountered while conducting the count.

Homeless Count Attempts to Find Needy in Suburban Shadows

By HANNAH KLARNER
Capital News Service

HYATTSVILLE, MD—It was dark at 6 a.m. when volunteers started searching for homeless people in Prince George's County, Maryland, and it was dark after 11 p.m. when they stopped.

Volunteers and Department of Social Services workers canvassed the county by breaking it into geographic sections as a part of the annual Point In Time Count for parts of Virginia and Maryland surrounding Washington, D.C.

One of the many challenges that we face in Prince George's

County is the invisible nature of suburban homelessness.

"It's not what you stereotypically think of—a homeless person pushing a grocery cart or carrying a lot of bags," said Katherine Carter, a volunteer from Brandywine, Maryland. "It's more subtle here. I think it takes a little

more time and outreach to ... locate them."

"When I was a kid, I thought all homeless people were the same. People who had been rejected by society," said one formerly homeless teenager who

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Prince George's Police Prepare to Roll Out Body Camera Program

By J.F. MEILS
Capital News Service

COLLEGE PARK, MD—At some point before April, 70 officers from the Prince George's County Police Department will go to work with a new piece of gear: body cameras.

Advocates hope the PGPD program—smaller in scope than similar efforts by police forces across the nation—will bring more accountability to a department with a long history of wrongdoing.

"There is still a belief in the Prince George's community that police officers are corrupt, hiding things and will lie to avoid responsibility for doing something improper," Steven Vinick, a local defense attorney who handles police misconduct cases, told Capital News Service.

The PGPD was last released from Justice Department monitoring in 2009 after "an alleged pattern or practice of excessive force throughout" the department. But concerns over police misconduct persist. The PGPD, the 27th largest force in the nation, tallied more than 700 allegations of misconduct in 2015, according to County's Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel.

As police forces rush to implement body camera programs nationwide, it's not clear if they will solve systemic policing issues like those identified by the Justice Depart-

ment in New Orleans, Ferguson, Baltimore or Chicago.

It's an open question in Prince George's County, too. The County Council provided significantly less support than requested for the PGPD pilot program—about \$135,000—with the department itself contributing \$65,000 from its asset forfeiture program. The initial estimate from Carlos Acosta, the department's inspector general and architect of the program, presented to the council was \$3.5 to \$5 million for three years to outfit a total of 1,000 officers.

By comparison, Baltimore County, whose police force is only slightly larger than the 1,700 officers in Prince George's, signed a \$12.5 million, 8-year contract with Taser a year ago, in addition to kicking in \$1.5 million in annual operating costs for a staff of 19 to administer the program.

"This [body camera program] is a much-needed reform," said Cary Hansel, a civil rights attorney who won a landmark case against the PGPD for coercive interrogation practices in 2006, and again on appeal in 2011. "But before we applaud it, we really need to see it implemented."

Acosta is well aware of the department's past. He was raised in Langley Park and worked as a deputy state's attorney in Prince George's. He thinks the

See **BODY CAMERA** Page A5

Maryland Agencies Pursue Program to Reduce Lead Poisoning, Asthma Cases

By PRESS OFFICER
DHMH

BALTIMORE, MD—The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announced today that it—in partnership with the Department of the Environment and the Department of Housing and Community Development—has applied to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to develop an initiative to re-

duce lead poisoning and to improve asthma, two conditions related to environmental conditions in housing.

The program would leverage federal funds available through the Maryland Medicaid Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to eliminate sources of lead poisoning in housing, to build capacity in local health departments to re-

See **POISONING** Page A3

PG County Launches New Government Mobile App for Smart Phones

By PRESS OFFICER
PG County Government

LARGO, MD—Prince George's County recently launched a new mobile application to help Prince George's County residents become more

connected to County government news and events through their mobile devices. The new app, "Mobile Prince George's," allows residents access to county

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State Leaders Touting Greatness Taking Place in Prince George's County

EDC Capitol Access Networking Event Highlights Legislative Priorities and Economic Momentum

By LORI C. VALENTINE
PGCEDC

ANNAPOLIS, MD—On February 9, 150 business owners from Prince George's County traveled to Annapolis for an exclusive opportunity to network, share their ideas and concerns with some of the most influential leaders in State and County government as the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) hosted its second annual 2017 Prince George's County Capitol Access VIP Reception. Business leaders that have benefitted from the open lines of communication between the business community and government regulators enthusiastically crowded into Harry Browne's restaurant on State Circle as the Baker Administration unveiled its legislative priorities for the 2017 legislative session.

In a statement about the event, County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III said:

"I want to thank the business owners and stakeholders of



PHOTO COURTESY LORI C. VALENTINE

EDC President and CEO Jim Coleman (left) and Maryland Commerce Secretary Mike Gill rally local business leaders at Annapolis Reception.

Prince George's County for taking time out of their valuable schedule to have their voices and concerns heard by our legislators in Annapolis," said Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III. "Over the

last six years, the growth of the Prince George's County business community has been recognized around the Region, State, and nation. My administration and the Prince George's County Economic Development Corpora-

tion is dedicated to continuing this success."

EDC President and CEO Jim Coleman welcomed the standing

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INSIDE

Bipartisan Coalition of House Members Introduce Legislation to Ban Juvenile Solitary Confinement

The solitary confinement of young people is a serious and widespread problem in the United States. Each day, in jails and prisons across America, youth under the age of 18 are held in solitary confinement often for weeks or months at a time.

Community, Page A3

Welcome to the Land of Opportunity

At a time when the national conversation is focused on building walls and closing doors against immigrants, Carlos is an immigrant with another goal. He's setting an example of what's possible when hardworking smart young people come to America determined to beat the odds and make a difference.

Commentary, Page A4

Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot Seeks Power to Combat Tax Fraud

Under the bill, the comptroller's Field Enforcement Bureau would receive expanded police powers, giving the agency the ability to apply for warrants to search documents belonging to tax preparers suspected of fraud.

Business, Page A5

Movie Review: *Hidden Figures*

It's satisfying in the classic Hollywood style, with little triumphs dotting the long road toward equality—little triumphs like hero astronaut John Glenn (Glen Powell) refusing to get into the space capsule until Katherine herself confirms that the calculations are correct (which is evidently true).

Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

Is alternative energy still the next big thing for American venture capitalists?

—Jeffrey Moss,
Fairfield, CT

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

District IV Commander Reilly talks about Citizens' Police Academy, also about car warm-ups

Maj. Brian Reilly, the new Commander for District IV, was guest speaker at the February meeting of the Skyline Citizens Association. Among other things, he reminded us that warming up your car in the morning (without you in it) is illegal, even if the car is locked.

And he talked with pride about the Citizens' Police Academy, Session #40 coming up March 27 to June 26, Monday nights 6 to 9 p.m., at the Training & Education Division, 8905 Presidential Parkway, 4th Floor, Upper Marlboro.

This training opportunity allows the community to become familiar with the Prince George's County Police Department and provides exposure to officer-related training such as investigative procedures, conflict management, crime scene investigations, and much more.

In order to participate, participants must be nominated by a law enforcement officer and approved by the District/Division Commander or Civilian Manager. Nomination forms and instructions may be obtained at any of the seven District stations. (Or I can make a copy for you.)

For information, contact your local District station or Sgt. Erica Johnson, 301-516-5600 or email ELJohnson@co.pg.md.us.

People

K. Alexander Wallace, School Board Member for District 7, attended the February meeting of the Skyline Citizens Association and offered to help our community fight to keep a playground on the property that once was Skyline School.

Ed Kittrell, founder of Skyline Day, was at the meeting precisely to give an emotional plea for that playground and what it meant to him and his friends when he was growing up here.

Ed's son, Deondre Kittrell was also there and told me that he has a part-time job with Park & Planning and is majoring in engineering at Prince George's Community College.

Brenda J. Farmer, of Skyline, retired Aug. 1 from The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy with 38 years' service.

Racheal Spruill, who lives near me on Skyline Drive, is majoring in biology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Her brother Johuaan Spruill is an engineering major at Prince George's Community College.

Community outreach at SRBC

Suitland Road Baptist Church is once again opening its doors for Community Outreach, offering free food and clothing, on Saturday, March 4, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The church is at 6412 Suitland Road, Dr. Kelvin M. McCune, pastor.

Shrove Tuesday events

Christ Episcopal Church in Clinton invites you to their Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Tuesday, Feb. 28, 4 to 7 p.m. in Dun Hall. There will also be a Bake Sale and 50/50 Raffle. Info: 301-868-1330.

St. Philip the Apostle Parish is hosting Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in the Parish Hall, Feb. 28, 5 to 7 p.m. Tickets: adults, \$6; age 5 to 12, \$3; and \$20 for family. Four & under, free. Info: Ligia Rojas, 301-899-7789.

Knitting at the library

Free knitting sessions, led by an advanced knitter, are now being held every Tuesday from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at the Surratt-Clinton Library, 9400 Piscataway Road in Clinton. Bring a current project or one skein of worsted weight yarn (#4) and one set of size 7 needles. For more information, call 301-868-9200.

Knitting calms the brain, relaxes the soul, and allows a creative release of energy.

American Girl Book Club at Darnall's Chance

Liberty Girls, An American Girl Book Club will be meeting at Darnall's Chance House Museum in Upper Marlboro on Saturdays March 4 & 11, April 1 & 8.

Each week they'll discuss a different Felicity book from the American Girl series with a Prince George's County librarian,

make a colonial craft, and enjoy period refreshments. The last session includes a book discussion, tea party, and dancing!

Sign up now (space is limited). \$30 club membership fee includes all sorts of Revolutionary things. Info: 301-952-8010.

Changing landscape

The Maryland Transit Administration is undertaking a study of possible rapid transit from the Branch Avenue Metro Station through Surrattsville, Brandywine and into Charles County. Having driven south on Branch Avenue several times lately I can say it can't happen too soon.

Suitland High grad, Calvert Commissioner dies at 74

Linda Lee (Sistek) Kelley, 74, a 1960 graduate of Suitland High School and former Calvert County Commissioner, died Feb. 1 at her home in Owings. At Suitland she was an award-winning majorette. Friends think she lived in District Heights during her high school years.

She worked at the Navy yard, Government Printing Office and Departments of Agriculture and Interior, retiring in 1990. In retirement, she served as President of the Dunkirk Area Concerned Citizens Association and was among the founders of Safe Harbor, a shelter for abused persons. She was Calvert representative to the Tri-County Animal Shelter.

Linda served four consecutive terms as Calvert County Commissioner, from 1994 to 2006.

She is survived by her husband Thomas A. Kelley, daughters Julie Lyn Spano and Alisa Jean Fisher, three grandchildren, three great-grands, and brothers William, Robert, Charles and Louis Sistek. Her funeral was at the First Lutheran Church of Calvert County.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Larry Miller, Feb. 24; Kevin Gray and Sibyl Deily, Feb. 25; Angela Hutchinson and Thomas "TJ" Flaherty, Feb. 27; Terrence Fla-

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Neighborhoods

Maryland Economy Wins Big With Clean Energy Jobs Act

ANNAPOLIS, MD—On February 2, 2017, The Maryland General Assembly voted to override Gov. Hogan's veto and restore the Clean Energy Jobs Act. American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) CEO Tom Kiernan hailed the override:

"Making the Clean Energy Jobs Act law is the right decision for Maryland. Renewable energy legislation is pro-growth, pro-business, and means access to more jobs in Maryland." said Tom Kiernan, AWEA CEO. "From the Free State's population-hubs to majestic shores, this ensures more low-cost, homegrown American wind power reaches homeowners and businesses."

In April 2016, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Clean Energy Jobs Act, legislation to increase the state's renewable energy standard by five percent so that a quarter of its energy comes from renewable sources by 2020. In May 2016, Governor Hogan vetoed the bill. Earlier this week, the Maryland House of Delegates voted to override that veto and today the Senate joined the lower chamber in restoring this important legislation.

Wind power employs just over 100,000 Americans according to the Department of Energy. One job description, the wind turbine service technician, is the fastest growing job in America, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wind power also relies on a robust American supply chain that consists of 500 factories across 43 states. Wind energy has already provided \$380 million of capital investment in Maryland, and wind turbine lease payments have generated up to \$1 million a year in Maryland.

States representing roughly a quarter of the U.S. population (California, Oregon, New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia) have chosen to raise their renewable energy goals over the past year while adding jobs and investment. California, Oregon, New York and Hawaii have standards aiming for 50 percent renewable energy and beyond.

Renewable energy makes America stronger. Meeting renewable energy goals created up to \$4.9 billion in reduced consumer energy prices according to research from the Department of Energy's labs and added 200,000 American jobs, and \$20 billion to annual GDP through 2013.

For a library of up-to-date images of wind energy visit the website at <http://www.awea.org/Media-Center/content.aspx?ItemNumber=7244>.

MD Health Department, Ex-Raven Orr 'Team Up' for Public Service Videos On Opioids

Marylanders Can Find Treatment Resources at MdDestinationRecovery.org
BALTIMORE, MD—As part of the Hogan administration's continued efforts to save lives and promote recovery amid the opioid crisis, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Behavioral Health Administration has re-

leased a series of public service announcements (PSAs) to be shown on TV and in movie theaters.

Behavioral Health teamed up with former Baltimore Ravens linebacker Zach Orr to address the stigma that surrounds substance use disorders—calling out the shame and stigma associated with this disease and promoting the value of treating it like any other disease.

"Addressing the stigma surrounding heroin and opioid addiction head-on is paramount to ending this epidemic once and for all," said Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford. "I'd like to thank Zach Orr for joining with us to raise awareness of this crisis and help save the lives of Marylanders across the state."

The PSAs are being broadcast in the wake of Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan's recent announcement of his 2017 Heroin and Opioid Prevention, Treatment, and Enforcement Initiative—which comprises an array of responses, such as increased treatment funding, limiting opioid prescriptions at the start of medical consultation and providing screening and linkages to treatment via emergency departments.

"We all have to 'team up' to mobilize against the opioid crisis. These PSAs help raise awareness about how pervasive substance use disorders are in our society," said Health and Mental Hygiene Secretary Dennis R. Schrader. "They also stress the importance of making sure that people impacted by addiction—and the people who love them—are aware of the resources available to them."

One PSA highlights the benefits of naloxone, the life-saving drug that can reverse an overdose, and provides viewers the opportunity to learn more about how to recognize the signs of an overdose and how to potentially save a life. A Good Samaritan Law PSA informs viewers about the law that protects Marylanders from arrest or prosecution if they assist someone overdosing and call 911.

Marylanders who need help finding substance use disorder treatment resources should visit <http://goo.gl/nlfGm0> or call the Maryland Crisis Hotline, which provides 24/7 support, at 1-800-422-0009. For information on many of the activities currently implemented to fight substance use disorder and overdose in Maryland, see <http://goo.gl/KvEzQw>. If you know of someone in need of treatment for a substance use disorder, treatment facilities can be found by location and program characteristics on our page at <http://goo.gl/rbGF6S>.

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is the State agency that protects Maryland's public health. We work together to promote and improve the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management, and community engagement. Stay connected by visiting the website: www.twitter.com/MarylandDHMH and www.facebook.com/MarylandDHMH.

Vennard Wright Named WSSC's New Chief Information Officer

LAUREL, MD—WSSC has named Vennard Wright as its new Chief Information Officer (CIO). Wright started earlier in January and is the latest addition to WSSC's senior leadership team.

"Vennard is a dynamic leader and brings a perfect mix of experience from the private and public sectors," said General Manager and CEO Carla A. Reid. "He's joining us at a very exciting time as we launch IT solutions and upgrades that enhance customer service on our journey to become a world class organization."

"The Commission is being radically reshaped by external forces such as increased requests for transparency from customers and a rapidly changing technology landscape" said CIO Vennard Wright. "My goal is to go beyond simply asking what our customers want, to observing and responding to their needs in real time and I commit to ensuring that we have the right skills, structure, technologies and capabilities in place to be prepared for the onslaught of anticipated projects and innovation opportunities that will make us successful in the future."

Wright served most recently as the CIO in Prince George's County, where he provided tactical and strategic leadership. He initiated and managed a 311 Call Center, spearheaded a Tech Prince George's initiative for the creation of a student career pipeline; and refreshed 6,000+ workstations across county agencies and branches of government.

Prior to his tenure with the county, he was a Senior Program Manager with Cherry Road Government Technologies, where he led the implementation of Montgomery County's 311 Call Center and the deployment of a video archival system for the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

He has held several prestigious volunteer positions including the Vice Chair of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments CIO Committee; Chair of the Prince George's County Tech Network; Vice President, Prince George's Community College Joint Advisory Board for STEM; Member, NACo Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee; and Board Member, Bowie State University School of Business.

He earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland.

WSSC provides life-sustaining water and wastewater services that are critical to public health. Our work makes it possible for individuals, families, and businesses to enjoy quality of life. For nearly 100 years, 24 hours a day, and seven days a week, we have served the people of Prince George's and Montgomery counties. WSSC drinking water has always met or surpassed federal standards. We are WSSC, Where Water Matters. www.wsscwater.com

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION

The Education Ministry at Westphalia extends an invitation to their Westphalia family and friends to join their children/youth in celebrating and honoring "Black History" on Sunday February 26, 2017. There will be a visiting choir and youth Minister. You will be able to indulge in a Taste of the Old South in between the two services.

The church is located at 9363 D'Arcy Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20774. Pastor Rev. Dr. Timothy West, Senior Pastor. Telephone number is 301-735-9373.

GOSPEL MUSIC PROGRAM

You are invited to come and enjoy an evening of Downhome Gospel Music Saturday, March 25, 2017, 3:00 PM at New Hope Fellowship Cooperative Parish Family Life Center. The program will feature The Mighty Wonders, The Briscoe Brothers, Liturgical Dancers and many more performers. There will be a free will offering (proceeds will go towards the Family Life Center Building Fund). For more information, contact the church at 301-888-2171 or

email:NewHope014@gmail.com. The address is 15601 Brooks Church Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

SOUTHERN AREA ASSESSMENT FESTIVAL

Please join us Saturday, March 25, 2017 from 9:00 AM-4:00 PM for the Southern Area Assessment Festival at Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High School. The address is 12650 Brooke Lane, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772.

For additional information, please call Lionel Harrell at 301-333-0963 or email him at lionel.harrell@pgcps.org.

MATH HELP

Count on us Math Help is available on Comcast channel 96 and Verizon channel 38 Mondays and Wednesdays. The two-hour call in show provides mathematical instruction to elementary and middle school students seeking homework help. Students can submit their math questions by emailing cou@pgcps.org.

BRANDYWINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Brandywine Elementary School Library and Courtyard was completed. The staff and

students are thankful and very excited about their new environment. It is a beautiful library. Thanks to Brandywine North Keys Civic Association, Heart of America Foundation in coordination with GS Proctor & Associates along with several businesses operating in Brandywine. Also thanks to volunteers from the community who were sought to assist with completing the various tasks required by this project. This initiative was viewed as a way for companies and individuals to give back to the community.

2017 SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS

Make summer memorable for students by enrolling them in a summer program offering activities for grades 2-8. For more information, contact www.pgcc.edu/go/summeryouth or call 301-546-0158.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The women at Clinton United Methodist Church will be doing some exciting things this year. They will sponsor a Dinner Sale and Mother's Day Bazaar on April 29, 2017. More information to follow in a later edition.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Nathaniel Sillin

Are You Having Trouble Paying Your Heating Bill? LIHEAP Could Help

The chill of winter can be offset with the pleasure of curling up inside a warm home. Turning on the heat and settling into your favorite chair to open a new book or watch a movie feels even better when snow falls or rain patters against the windows. Unfortunately, some families have to choose between paying high winter utility bills and buying groceries or gas for their cars. The necessity of food and transportation often wins.



Fortunately, there are assistance programs. One such program, the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), helps low-income households with heating or cooling costs, during an energy-related crisis (such as a shutoff notice from your utility) and with weatherization improvements.

If you, a parent or a friend are struggling to make ends meet this winter, LIHEAP and similar programs might be able to help keep your home warm.

Apply as soon as you can if you think you'll need assistance. The federal government provides the funding for LIHEAP, but the programs are run at the state level. The money gets distributed on a first-come-first-served basis and states give priority to households with children, elderly or disabled members. Often the largest benefits are awarded to the homes with the most need.

States open their winter applications at different times, and you should apply for LIHEAP right away if you think you'll have trouble paying for heating.

LIHEAP won't cover your entire utility bill, but it can help keep your home warm. LIHEAP's heating benefit is only intended to help you pay to heat your home. For example, if you're heating unit runs on gas, the program will contribute towards your gas bill, but not your electricity bill.

You might only be able to receive a benefit once every 12 months, but it can make a big difference for your finances. For the fiscal year 2014, the most recent data available, over 5.7 million households received heating assistance and it offset an average 45.9 percent of recipients' annual heating costs.

Qualifying for LIHEAP assistance. States, tribes and territories have some control over the services, qualifications, aid limits and application process for the LIHEAP program in their area.

You can review each state's income eligibility for the fiscal year 2017 on this table. The state or local organizations that distribute funds also consider applicants' utility costs, family size and location. Renters and homeowners could be eligible for LIHEAP assistance, but you might not qualify if you have subsidized housing.

Being qualified doesn't guarantee that you'll get assistance. Each state receives a set amount of funds for the year, and on average only 20 percent of qualified household receive benefits.

How to apply for LIHEAP. Often you'll apply for LIHEAP at a Community Action Agency (CAA), local non-profit organizations that help administer federal, state and local grant programs. Some states let you complete the application online, otherwise you may need to mail, fax or hand in an application.

The Office of Community Service's website has contact information for each state and territory, including a link to a website where you'll find state-specific eligibility guidelines and program information.

As part of the application process, you may need to share identifying and financial information, including:

- Recent utility bills.
- Recent pay stubs, or a profit-and-loss statement if you're self-employed.
- Documentation for other income, such as Social Security benefits.
- A lease or property tax bill as proof of your address.
- Your Social Security number.
- A list of people living in your home, their relation to you, dates of birth and incomes.
- A copy of a utility termination notice, if you received one.
- Your energy provider's information.

If you're having trouble with your state's website, or want to help someone who isn't computer savvy, you can call the LIHEAP Clearinghouse's National Energy Assistance Referral (NEAR) at 1-866-674-6327 (TTY: 1-866-367-6228).

Bottom line: When the temperature drops, heating costs can quickly rise. You shouldn't have to suffer, and LIHEAP could help provide much-needed financial aid. You can look for additional assistance programs using the Benefits.gov search tool. Also look into state-based programs and payment plans or assistance from your local utility.

Morningside from A2

herty, Feb. 28; Gerry Jolliffe, Feb. 29 (no real birthday for him for three more years); Winifred Lanehart, March 1;

Karen (Elborne) Stern and Harold Titus, March 2.

Happy anniversary to Clifford and Nancy Lantz on Feb. 26, and to Freda and Michael McDonald, their 37th on Feb. 28.

Bipartisan Coalition of House Members Introduce Legislation to Ban Juvenile Solitary Confinement

MERCY Act Would Prohibit Solitary Confinement of Juveniles Tried in Federal System

By PRESS OFFICER
United States Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Reps. Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), Mia Love (R-UT), Raúl Labrador (R-ID), John Conyers (D-MI), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY) and Karen Bass (D-CA) introduced the Maintaining Dignity and Eliminating Unnecessary Restrictive Confinement of Youths Act of 2017 (MERCY Act). The MERCY Act would prohibit the solitary confinement of juveniles who are tried in the federal system and held in pretrial facilities or juvenile detention facilities, barring some extremely exceptional temporary circumstances. Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Rand Paul (R-KY), Mike Lee (R-UT), James Lankford (R-OK), Richard Durbin (D-IL), and Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the bill in the Senate.

"When our youth are incarcerated, they are often already forced to reckon with the stark reality of the consequences of their actions—such as being separated from their friends and family and grappling with uncertain futures," Cummings said. "Compounding incarceration with solitary confinement can break a young person's spirit beyond repair, and it can have devastating long-term impacts on their mental and physical health. The MERCY Act will take a strong step toward eliminating this barbaric practice, so that we can ensure our youth have a chance to be rehabilitated and

become contributing members of their communities."

"Our corrections system should not just administer justice but also aim to rehabilitate—not create new or exacerbate existing problems," Love said. "Unfortunately, extended solitary confinement is linked to a host of long-term psychological issues. By ending its long-term use, this legislation preserves the dignity of individuals and protects their mental health. I am proud to join with my colleagues in introducing this legislation and look forward to helping move these reforms forward."

Labrador said, "Reforming our criminal justice system demands a focus on long-term outcomes. Solitary confinement of juveniles presents serious risk to the mental and physical health of young offenders who will return to our communities. We must ensure that incarceration practices don't hinder their development as we work to set them on a path to become responsible, law-abiding members of society."

Conyers said, "We must reinforce actions taken by President Obama last year with respect to solitary confinement of juveniles in the federal system by enacting legislation to address this serious issue. As he noted, solitary confinement has the potential to lead to devastating, lasting psychological consequences, and this is particularly so with respect to juveniles. Over time, we have come to recognize these negative impacts

and it is time that Congress act. Pursuing smarter strategies for dealing with challenges posed by individual prisoners, especially juveniles, will lead to more effective prison administration, a reduction in recidivism, and safer communities."

"I am glad to see meaningful criminal justice reform incorporate the valuable insights offered by the MERCY Act in the pursuit of policy change to remedy the inhumane and harsh treatment suffered by juveniles and youth involved in our justice system," Jackson Lee said. "I am delighted to be an original co-sponsor of this critical legislation and much needed effort to alleviate the cruel, brutal and inhumane conditions of confinement that prevent adolescent rehabilitation and participation in reentry programming. As I have often stated in the past, meaningful criminal justice reform must look at all the ways the system touches the lives of our young people and communities and recognize that restoring their vulnerable population requires trauma-informed and age appropriate care. This legislation is step toward catapulting this nation into action on criminal and juvenile justice reform."

"Our criminal justice system is broken, especially when it comes to how we approach juvenile offenders—focusing on retribution instead of rehabilitation," Maloney said. "Holding children and adolescents in solitary confinement is barbaric, detrimental to their health and can be extremely harmful

to their development both mentally and physically. The MERCY Act takes an important step towards breaking the cycle of incarceration and gives young offenders the opportunity to become contributing members of our schools and community after they have served their time."

"The MERCY Act rightly calls attention to the need for smart reform and trauma-informed care for all justice-involved youth and is a necessary piece of legislation that aims to eliminate harmful and dangerous confinement practices for this vulnerable population. It is time we start addressing the underlying issues of trauma and abuse, as well as the emotionally damaging triggers of adolescent behaviors in a humane and medically informed way. The bottom line here is that cruel and inhumane conditions of confinement for youth in America must stop," Bass said.

The solitary confinement of young people is a serious and widespread problem in the United States. Each day, in jails and prisons across America, youth under the age of 18 are held in solitary confinement often for weeks or months at a time. In 2011 alone, more than 95,000 youth were held in prisons and jails, and a significant number were held in solitary confinement. In 2013, the Department of Justice found that 47

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Networking from A1

room crowd, calling them all VIP's because of their commitment to making Prince George's County one of the most dynamic jurisdictions in the State of Maryland. Mr. Coleman also provided the crowd with information about County Executive Baker's upcoming business mission to Korea and China in April and stressed the importance of preparing and connecting local companies with international investment partners and exporting opportunities.

"The EDC is proud to host important networking events like this, that connect our residents and business community to the valuable resources they need, want and deserve," said Coleman. "As business has grown, our unemployment rate is shrinking, our assessable tax rate is increasing, our homes are more prosperous and our business community created more than 5,000 jobs last year. Whether you are a business owner, a member of the House of Delegates, or the Senate of

Maryland, or the County Council or a part of the Baker Administration or the Hogan Administration, all of you are critical parts of making Prince George's County the best place in the world to live, work and play."

County CAO Nick Majett, and Assistant Deputy Chief Administrative Office David Iannucci were among the dignitaries in attendance from the Baker Administration. Baker's chief legislative office, J. Kenneth Battle briefly outlined his legislative priorities, which include: securing operating and capital funding State funding for the Regional Medical Center, securing State commitment for infrastructure improvements and capital budget allocation at one of the two County sites under consideration for the Federal Bureau of Investigation headquarters relocation. Mr. Battle also stated that the County is focused on operating and construction funding for K-12 public school education, which includes significant expendi-

tures to repair, renovate or replace schools as needed. State funding for critical road projects, mass transportation, pedestrian safety and public safety throughout the County are also top priorities that they County is working to protect.

Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Governor Hogan's Deputy Chief of Staff Britta Vander Linden, and House Delegation Chair Jay Walker were also among the State officials in attendance and that commended the business community for their part in bringing economic change to Prince George's County.

Maryland Commerce Secretary Mike Gill talked about the greatness that is taking place in Prince George's County.

"Momentum is everything and Prince George's County has the momentum. And you have the momentum on leadership, the momentum on location, and the momentum on culture and are passionate about what you are doing," said Gill.

Tonight's event was generously sponsored by CPJ & Associates, Washington Gas, JGL Law, Civility Management Solutions and FSC First.

The next EDC networking opportunity will be on March 15th when the EDC, in partnership with the TechBreakfast Prince George's—a fun, supportive "pitch-free" environment for innovators and influencers in the tech ecosystem to share their innovations and get interaction and constructive feedback from the audience. This event will be held from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. in National Harbor at Spartan Business & Technology, 161 National Plaza, Suite 200, Oxon Hill, MD 20745.

To attend the next meeting please RSVP to Nicole Edwards (naedwards@co.pg.md.us) at 301-583-4650. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact Nichelle Holmes, EDC Development Manager (naholmes@co.pg.md.us) or 301-583-4621.

Poisoning from A1

duce lead poisoning and asthma related to housing conditions, and to address lead and asthma health disparities.

"We know that housing conditions can severely affect a child's health, and this program would enable us to get to the root of the problems for many children," said Health and Mental Hygiene Secretary Dennis R. Schrader. "It would go beyond merely treating a child with asthma or lead poisoning—it would seek to prevent exposures to the triggers, causes and social determinants

of these conditions, which is the best means of preventing the life-long impacts of these diseases."

The new program would have two parts. The first component would involve a partnership between Health and Mental Hygiene and Housing and Community Development to expand lead identification and abatement programs delivered by the latter agency. The second would expand local health departments' programs that help families and health care providers to identify and to eliminate sources of lead exposures and asthma triggers

in homes. The programs would both be coordinated with the Department of the Environment's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, prioritizing people affected by lead.

"We look forward to working with the departments of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Environment to ensure healthy housing for Maryland's families," said Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt.

If approved, up to \$3.7 million dollars in CHIP federal matching funds could be available to the State, to supplement

\$500,000 that Governor Larry Hogan authorized Medicaid to use in fiscal year 2017 for

lead abatement purposes. An additional \$2.6 million could potentially be available to the State in fiscal year 2018 to fund the local health departments' programs that serve families with children affected by lead or asthma.

"This continues Governor Hogan's emphasis on eradicating the lingering problem of lead poisoning through comprehensive, coordinated, and creative actions," said Department of the Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles.

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COMMENTARY

Cong. Steny H. Hoyer House Democratic Minority Whip



Congressman Steny Hoyer Remarks at the 36th Annual Black History Month Breakfast

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—This morning, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05) attended the 36th annual Black History Month breakfast. He was joined by keynote speaker Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, Congressman Anthony Brown, and hundreds of constituents and community leaders from Maryland's Fifth District. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery.

Opening Remarks

"Thank you. This is one of my favorite events of the year.

"As we join to celebrate Black History Month, we do so at a moment of great uncertainty and unease. Uncertainty about the future in an age where the very foundations of America seem shaky—including the right to vote, the equality of every person under our laws, and the way justice will be carried out. And unease because so much of the progress we've made has suddenly been called into question.

"In no area is this more pronounced than the field of education. The theme of this year's Black History Breakfast is, of course, 'The Challenges in Black Education and Opportunities in America.' Education and opportunities. The two go hand-in-hand.

"For generations, the number-one path to opportunity and the American dream, to social and economic advancement, has been education. And throughout the eras of Abolition, Reconstruction, the Great Migration, the Civil Rights Movement, and the War on Poverty, the emphasis on education has been paramount.

"From dangerous, clandestine lessons to those held as slaves to the founding of schools and colleges for freedmen; from growth of historically black colleges and universities to the modern movements for equity in access—education has been a powerful tool in the fight against inequalities, disparities, and lingering injustices.

"Frederick Douglass, that great native son of Maryland, summed up the case for education better than anyone else: 'It is far easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.' That Fred Douglass ... what a guy ... I hear he's been doing some great things lately and getting recognized more and more.

"In all seriousness, though, Douglass was right: we have a choice.

"We can make further investments in educating our youth today or we will have to face the challenges tomorrow of having failed to do so. But some in our country don't understand that it's not as simple as choosing to make education a priority.

"We have to do it right. We have to listen to those who are on the front lines: the teachers, the parents, the pastors and other community leaders, and the students themselves.

"That was the approach my colleagues and I took when we worked on the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, which was signed into law by President Obama.

"Led by Education and Workforce Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott of Virginia, De-

See **BLACK HISTORY MONTH** Page A6

Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



Trump's Travel Ban Betrays American Values

"Like many immigrants, we came to this country empty-handed. We believed in American democracy—that with hard work and the goodness of this country, we could share in and contribute to its blessings. We were blessed to raise our three sons in a nation where they were free to be themselves and follow their dreams. Our son, Humayun, had dreams of being a military lawyer. But he put those dreams aside the day he sacrificed his life to save his fellow soldiers ... If it was up to Donald Trump, he never would have been in America."

—Khizr Khan, father of U.S. Army captain killed in Iraq, Democratic National Convention Address, July 28, 2016

Ninth Circuit Court's Refusal to Reinstate Headed to Supreme Court

As a Republican candidate running for the nation's highest office, Donald Trump promised an enthusiastic crowd of supporters that in the wake of the San Bernardino, CA attack—a mass shooting perpetrated by an American citizen of Pakistani descent and his wife, a Pakistani national and lawful permanent resident—he would, as president, call for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on." It took only a week into his new administration for now-President Trump to make good on his campaign trail promise. With the easy stroke of a pen, and a messyroll-out, President Trump summarily stopped an entire class of people from entering the country, throwing airports into chaos and confusion, sparking spontaneous protests, delaying or halting family reunions and disrupting the lives of lawful immigrants both within and outside our nation's borders.

The "Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry to the United States" executive order, along with two previous orders, triggered a blanket, targeted 90-day ban on all travelers from seven predominately Muslim countries— Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen—all deemed terrorist hot-beds. The entry of any and all refugees was suspended for 120 days, including an indefinite ban on refugees from war-torn Syria,

as Trump's administration established "new vetting measures to keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the United States of America." The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco has refused to reinstate the ban, key parts of which were suspended by a district court judge.

The Administration has made clear its intention to appeal to the Supreme Court.

In the court of law, what is at stake here is defining what, if any, checks can be placed on the president's authority to oversee and determine federal immigration policy. In the court of popular opinion, however, what is at stake here is how we define ourselves as a nation and how we will continue to define ourselves in the future and in the face of legitimate national security concerns.

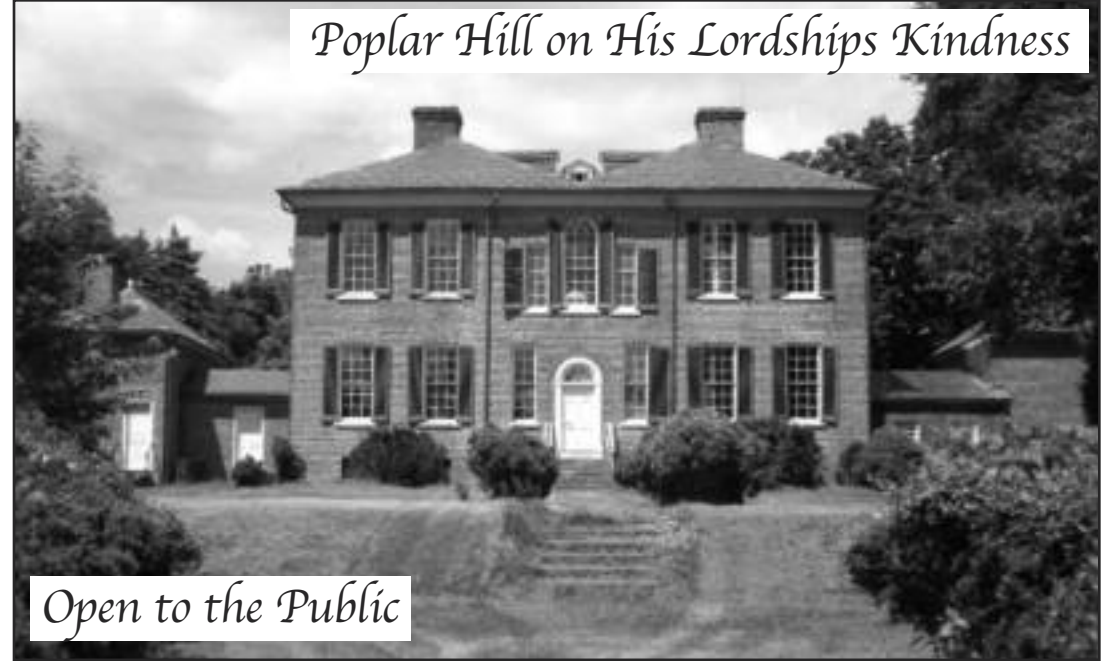
Fear, fiction, alternative facts, reality and discrimination have no place in this critical discussion where lives hang in the balance on both sides of the debate.

By singling out majority-Muslim countries, the Trump administration has effectively created an unconstitutional, discriminatory religious preference in our immigration policy that also slams the doors shut on Muslims, while opening the doors and prioritizing the admissions of non-Muslim refugees—namely, Christians, who are fleeing their countries in response to religious persecution. The First Amendment's Establishment Clause forbids our government to establish an official religion or to officially prefer one religion over another religion. This order is, therefore, not based on core American values.

None of the perpetrators of major terrorist attacks on U.S. soil has come from any of the seven countries that are on the president's executive order. In fact, the majority of attackers come from within our borders, with many national security and counterterrorism experts noting that the perpetrators of attacks on U.S. soil have primarily been U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents—who, incidentally, have not been from any of the seven countries on the ban list. As far as refugees are concerned, there have been no fatal terrorist

See **TRAVEL BAN** Page A5

Poplar Hill on His Lordships Kindness



Open to the Public

PHOTO COURTESY WIKIMAPIA

POPLAR HILL ON HIS LORDSHIPS KINDNESS

This National Historic Landmark derives its name from a 7,000 acre land grant from Lord Baltimore to a relative. It has been the home of justices of the county and levy courts, a U.S. Senator, and a U.S. ambassador. The property contains historic outbuildings such as a privy, a dairy, slave infirmary, and smoke house. Open Mar–Dec, Fri, 1 to 4 p.m.; 2nd and 4th Sun, 12 noon to 4 p.m. with last tour at 3:30 p.m. Group tours and alternate visiting hours welcome by appointment.

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Welcome to the Land of Opportunity

"My mother always said, 'Learn what you can learn for yourself, and then share your knowledge with others.' My goal now is to advocate for equality and help others in need. Perhaps I have this opportunity because the purpose of my life has been to open the door for others."

At a time when the national conversation is focused on building walls and closing doors against immigrants, Carlos is an immigrant with another goal. He's setting an example of what's possible when hardworking smart young people come to America determined to beat the odds and make a difference. Carlos was born in the mountains of Guatemala. As a young child he was fascinated by nature and remembers climbing every tree he could to get a better glimpse of the birds and animals around him—but that kind of freedom didn't last long. At an age when American preschoolers get ready to start kindergarten, Carlos went to work.

At first he did what he could to help his mother as she cleaned houses. He never knew his father, and his mother couldn't afford any of the fees for the uniforms or pens and pencils and other supplies required for Carlos to attend school. After a few years Carlos earned money by chopping wood or doing small carpentry jobs. He started leaving home where work was scarce to work in other parts of his country. He was away working when a boss called him over to tell Carlos his mother had died. Carlos was 15 and completely on his own.

The musical cultural sensation Hamilton famously retells the story of the founding father who started off in similar circumstances: abandoned by his father, forced to work at a young age, and suddenly orphaned, poor, and all alone. Carlos, too, realized his hope for survival lay with starting over in America—still the land of opportunity in his eyes where even an "orphan immigrant" could have a chance. For Carlos this meant an arduous 2,000 mile journey—most of it walking—figuring out his way as he went. He arrived in the United States with an empty stomach and swollen, bruised feet. His relief at making it to

America as an unaccompanied minor was matched by his astonishment when he moved to Washington, D.C. with his sponsors, and for the first time in his life was allowed to go to school.

Carlos was now 17 and determined to make the most of this American dream. As his sponsor and guardian Yolanda Alcorta says, "He was just so thrilled to go to school, that he just took it all in. He wanted to know more, faster. Within two months of school, he was helping other students with their math. He's the why person, the question asker." Carlos arrived speaking very little English. Everything about life in the United States was a new experience to him: the height of the buildings, the shopping malls, the size of his public high school, snow. His first dream was simply to be able to earn enough to put food on the table. He never imagined he might be able to go to college, but slowly he was able to expand his horizons: "At first my goal was to work, but then that changed to graduate scho... Now my goal is to become an engineer."

He's already on his way. Despite how far behind he was when he first stepped into a classroom, Carlos was able to

graduate from high school in three years and began attending George Washington University last summer to pursue a degree in engineering. He's also the recipient of a Children's Defense Fund Beat the Odds® scholarship. In his thank you speech he said, "Am I awake or am I dreaming? Every morning for the past three years, I woke up with my face covered with blankets and thinking that I had to go to work, but then I realized that I had to go to school! And since July I've been waking up to go to my college classes!— [This award] motivated me when I was questioning if I should finish high school or go to work. It gave me the courage to continue, although I still have to make up for 16 years of learning." That's when he explained that he hopes to honor his mother's memory by using the opportunity he's been given to give back and help others.

Carlos's story is part of America's long tradition of welcoming immigrants and letting them use their talents to shine and contribute here—a tradition that's shaped our nation since its founding. The Statue of Liberty

See **WATCH**, Page A8

The Prince George's Post

The Prince George's Post
P.O. Box 1001 15207 Marlboro Pike
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3151
Phone: 301-627-0900 • Legal Fax: 301-627-6260
Email: pgpost@gmail.com
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Publisher/Senior Editor Legusta Floyd	Editor Michal W. Frangia
General Manager/ Legal Advertising Manager Brenda Boice	Typesetter/Page Layout Jennifer Sheckels
Legal Advertising Assistant Robin Boerckel	Web Manager Kyler Quesenberry

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BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Surviving a Broken Heart

Yes, Valentine's Day has come and gone, but perhaps it wasn't a happy holiday for you. Love may be wonderful, but not every relationship is going to last forever and when the present love of your life announces that he or she is out the door, it's anything but wonderful.

So how does one cope with the loss and pain that a broken relationship usually brings, whenever it may happen? One starting point is the age-old adage to let time be the healer. Give yourself distance from the breakup and you'll also gain perspective. You'll see that eventually your broken heart will heal, but it's necessary to do that healing at your own pace, not someone else's.

But what can you do to handle that initial period of pain? Here are some practical tips to help:

- 1. Recognize this as a loss,** similar to the death of someone close to you. It's fine to mourn, but don't beat yourself up or feel guilty for being sad or angry.
- 2. Acknowledge that the day will come when you will get better.** Time really does heal.
- 3. Take care of yourself physically.** Get lots of rest but don't languish in bed. Exercise. Eat well and sensibly. This is not the time to pig out nor the time for stringent dieting.
- 4. Put structure in your life.** Stick to your regular schedule as much as possible during the week. Make plans for evenings, weekends and holidays.
- 5. Realize you really aren't alone.** Seek the support of others. It's okay to accept comforting but don't wallow in repeated story telling.
- 6. Be aware of the rebound.** This is not the time to rekindle old, failed relationships, nor the time to start a new one.
- 7. Forgive your ex-lover.** Forgive yourself. Celebrate the good in the relationship ended, but don't hold on to mementos from it. They can keep you stuck in the past. Honor what you had, then let it go. Accept that when something's over, it's over.
- 8. Reaffirm yourself.** Accept it's okay not to be in a relationship and that you are still a good person.

Taking these simple steps can help minimize that pain and put your life back on a positive, solid footing. And one day soon you will be able to commend yourself for your courage and your survival. You made it! And hopefully, come next Valentine's Day, you'll again be a participating member of the relationship celebration.

Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org

Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot Seeks Power to Combat Tax Fraud

By JACOB TAYLOR
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Legislation supported by Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot and Gov. Larry Hogan would give new powers to the comptroller's office to combat tax fraud.

Testifying Tuesday before the House Judiciary Committee, Franchot, a Democrat, asked lawmakers to "give me the power to make a difference here."

At a summit he hosted last month, Franchot said it's "an existential threat to our agency that tax fraud is increasing."

The Taxpayer Protection Act would require tax preparation companies to hire only tax preparers who are registered with the State Board of Individual Tax Preparers.

The act also extends the statute of limitations on tax offenses from three years to six years, making it easier for law enforcement to pursue cases against suspected fraudsters.

Under the bill, the comptroller's Field Enforcement Bureau would receive expanded police powers, giving the agency the ability to apply for warrants to search documents belonging to tax preparers suspected of fraud.

Currently, the comptroller's field agents have to get a member of a different law enforcement arm, usually a state trooper, to apply for the warrant on their behalf.

At present, Franchot said his office, without help from other law enforcement, can only get documents and records from suspected fraudsters if they are surrendered willingly. He said that rarely happens because the people they are investigating "may be crooked, but they're not stupid."

Hogan, a Republican, supports the bill and requested it be taken up by the legislature. In a statement online, the governor's office said the bill will "strengthen the ability of the Office of the Comptroller to prevent tax fraud, protect taxpayer information, and hold fraudulent filers and tax preparers accountable."

The comptroller's office says it blocked about 27,000 fraudulent returns worth an estimated total of \$40 million in 2016—a more than 40-fold increase over 2007.

On Tuesday, Franchot said the state was "doing alright" blocking fraudulent returns, but that it needs stronger deterrents to prevent fraud in the first place. He said the comptroller's office has prevented more than \$100

million from being given out in fraudulent returns since he took over the department in 2007.

However, these numbers are difficult to put in context because the comptroller's office has no metrics tracking the overall scope of the problem in Maryland, Assistant Comptroller Joseph Shapiro told the University of Maryland's Capital News Service on Tuesday.

It is not clear how many fraudulent returns are filed, nor are there concrete numbers available on how much the state pays out in falsely or erroneously filed returns, Shapiro said.

Due to the ease and convenience of online tax filing, individual fraudsters can submit hundreds to thousands of refunds online using stolen personal information.

Under pressure to complete returns quickly, the IRS and its state equivalents may pay out a fake return in a matter of days; in many cases, the fraud is not discovered until months later when the real person files a genuine return. The real filer is obligated to their refund, often forcing the revenue agency to simply absorb the cost of the fraud, basically passing the cost on to taxpayers.

At the Jan. 19 summit at the University of Baltimore, Larry Benson, the director of Strategic Alliances for Revenue Discovery and Recovery at LexisNexis Risk Solutions—which submitted testimony in support of the bill—outlined the ease with which tax fraudsters can file fraudulent returns. Most returns can be filed to the IRS using just a name, birthdate, and Social Security number.

Furthermore, the returns can be paid out to any bank account or mailed to any recipient as a prepaid debit card, Benson said. Both payment systems make it easy for fraudsters to launder or hide money once it's been paid out.

In submitted written testimony, the Maryland Association of Certified Public Accountants and the Federation of Tax Administrators expressed unqualified support for the bill.

Within the tax preparation industry, H&R Block and Liberty Tax Service also submitted testimony supporting the bill. In its statement, H&R Block lamented that the company "must compete against unscrupulous preparers who find new and exploitive ways to steal from taxpayers."

Travel Ban from A4

attacks by refugees in this country for nearly 40 years. According to a Cato Institute study on immigration and terrorism, "all of the murders committed by foreign-born refugees in terrorist attacks were committed by those admitted prior to the 1980 act." The Refugee Act of 1980 is described as the "modern, rigorous refugee-screening procedures currently in place." This order is, therefore, not based on reality.

The executive order foments fear. The executive order foments hate and falsely justifies and legalizes discrimination. The executive order ignores the reality of migration and terrorism and puts American lives at risk by failing to address our very real issues and potentially unleashing anti-American sentiment around the globe that could very well translate into devastating attacks. We, as a nation, cannot and should not support discrimination of any kind, person or religion, because since our founding we have aspired

to renounce discrimination. We have failed, but we have also struggled to remain true to the ideals woven into the DNA of America. Favoring one religion over the other and punishing entire countries by associating all her citizens with criminal intent flies in the face of our American ideals and the Constitution. Further, it's a short slide from religious discrimination to racial discrimination. First they came for the Muslims, and you said—what? All people who abhor discrimination must speak up!

Homeless from A1

requested that his name be withheld to protect his privacy.

This break from the stereotype of a homeless person is one of the main issues that the general public needs to understand, according to John Summerlot, an outreach and engagement manager from the county's Department of Social Services.

"I think the main thing that people don't understand about homelessness in Prince George's County is that it exists. It is an issue," he said.

Literal homelessness has been on the decline in Prince George's County since 2013, when they counted 686 homeless people, according to the Point In Time Survey from that year. The numbers have been consistently declining, including 544 literally homeless in 2016, the most recent year with data.

In order to find people, volunteers and staff were divided into teams to load mini-vans with supplies, and sent to different regions of the county on Jan. 25. The donated supplies included hats, gloves and scarves, bottled water, sandwiches, chips and toiletries.

Driving slowly in the dark, Renee Pope, assistant director of community services, sat in the front seat of one van, eyes constantly scanning the roadside for signs of homeless people.

Before volunteers began canvassing, they were told some key indicators of homelessness: Look for people who appeared to be carrying everything they own, who may look unkempt.

Armed with the description, identifying the suburban homeless was still a challenge.

One man, repairing a car in an auto supply store parking lot did not stand out, but when

asked, said he had been homeless for well over a decade.

As the sun set, the mild January day turned into a cold winter night, and volunteers bundled up and kept searching.

Volunteers were told they could ask panhandlers whether they were homeless, but to let those who may be sleeping be, and if any person did not want to be interviewed for the Point In Time Count, that would be respected.

The Point In Time Count includes a 21-question survey, conducted either on a smartphone or on paper printouts.

Questions include age, veteran status, health needs, and for the initials of a respondent, but not their full name. The questionnaire also asks for gender, with answers for male, female, transgender, or "does not identify as Male, Female or Transgender."

Summerlot said that homelessness disproportionately impacts the LGBTQ community, especially younger members.

Homelessness is largely viewed negatively. Carter thinks that may have an impact on people's willingness to find assistance.

"There is a stigma with homelessness. People are ashamed. They might not want it to be known. It leaves them not wanting to seek out housing or support services," she said.

Pope said that one idea they try to repeat is that "Homelessness is a housing condition, not an identity."

To that end, the team at Social Services categorizes people's situations differently. "Unstably housed" is a lot like couch surfing, whereas "chronic homelessness" is defined as being continuously homeless for one year, or being homeless for

the duration of one year during a three-year period.

Age may play into people's perceptions of their own homelessness, too, according to Summerlot.

"If someone in their 30s or 40s is homeless, they've generally been homeless for longer," he said. "And so they've figured out how to navigate their situation and maybe they're not as reluctant to identify as homeless because they are sort of more profoundly homeless."

The team pressed on through the night, visiting gas stations, libraries, strip malls, and Metro stations.

Tips come in for locations from police departments, community groups and churches, among others.

Emergency housing is just one aspect of help offered by the agency. By contacting the county's homeless hotline, they secure emergency housing for the night, and case workers can begin the process of assessing the person's individual needs.

Social Services can work to get identification, set up Social Security benefits, or find permanent or rapid housing.

Without street outreach programs, the only way for a person to get access some resources is through shelters, however some, like the formerly homeless youth, 18, are reluctant to go.

"I never really wanted to go," he said. "I had a lot of anxiety about going there at first, but it was one of the best decisions of my life."

Some places to find a homeless person are obvious, like near grocery stores, municipal buildings, public transportation and bathrooms. Others are less

See HOMELESS Page A7

Body Camera from A1

body camera program will help improve the relationship between the public and police.

"I believe the person behind the camera and the person in front of it will behave better," he said.

For Prince George's 900,000 residents—two-thirds of whom are black—the PGPD's reform efforts are still a work in progress. But some residents share Acosta's optimism.

"Citizens of the county overwhelmingly view body cams as a step in the right direction," said Rashawn Ray, a University of Maryland sociologist working with the PGPD on a range of studies, including community perceptions of body cameras.

Change and the PGPD

The 1999 Justice Department inquiry that led to a decade of federal monitoring began in the PGPD's canine section. A Washington Post investigation that year cited 18 lawsuits involving assaults by PGPD dogs during a six-year stretch in the mid-1990s. According to the Post, "Prince George's County police sometimes let dogs loose to attack whomever they encounter and, at other times, order them to bite suspects already subdued or handcuffed."

A number of recent high-profile incidents have not helped the department shed its reputation for brutality.

In January 2016, former PGPD officer Jenchesky Santiago was sentenced to five years in prison for putting his gun to the head of a Maryland man in May 2014, claiming the victim was illegally parked in front of his own home.

PGPD officer Juan Hernandez was indicted by a grand jury

in December 2016 for using a police car to strike an unarmed suspect who was running away, according to John Erzen, a spokesman for the Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office and court records.

In 2012, PGPD officer Jerry Thomas was caught on video punching a handcuffed 15-year-old in the face twice after the teen jawed at Thomas in a county jail cell. Thomas received probation and was found guilty of misconduct, according to court records.

Lastly, there was the on-campus beating of University of Maryland student John McKenna following a University of Maryland basketball victory, which led to a 2nd-degree assault conviction for PGPD officer James J. Harrison.

Would body cameras have prevented these incidents?

Hansel cited the department's experience with dashboard cameras, a 10-year-old program, as a reason for skepticism. "Unfortunately, what happens is when video helps the police, it's readily available," he said. "When it doesn't help the police, the camera was broken that day, or not working or the data was corrupted—I've heard it all."

A 2015 report from the Prince George's Civilian Complaint Oversight Panel confirmed Hansel's concerns: "Unfortunately, a pattern has continued over the past several years where many older police cruisers either have no audio-visual equipment; have obsolete or malfunctioning equipment; or officers have demonstrated a lack of training in properly deploying the equipment ..."

The county's body camera program will go live against a backdrop of fluctuating complaint numbers over the last decade.

Of the 746 allegations of misconduct against the PGPD reported by the County's Citizen Complaint Oversight Panel in 2015, 185—or one in four—were related to use-of-force.

The department's internal affairs division, which pursues investigations of misconduct, sustained 97 of the allegations and exonerated officers in 104 instances. In 179 cases, the allegations were determined to be "unfounded," or not true, and 366 allegations were "non-sustained," defined as: "The evidence fails to prove or disprove the alleged act(s) occurred," according to the CCOP.

The 2015 report from the CCOP also noted that the percentage of allegations sustained by the department's internal affairs division in 2015 fell by 22 percent from the prior year and by 16 percent from 2013.

A Pilot Program

When the program launches, one squad of 10 officers from each of the county's seven districts will be outfitted with body cameras. A second squad from each district without cameras will serve as a control group, to facilitate a larger group of studies being done by the University of Maryland.

The partnership, hatched almost two years ago by Acosta and Patricio Korzeniewicz, the University of Maryland's sociology department chair, includes a number of initiatives designed to assess the PGPD's body camera program.

"Some officers don't want them," Ray said. "But the majority are in favor because they feel the body cams will reduce the number of complaints they receive."

See BODY CAMERA Page A7

OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK
Movie Review

Hidden Figures

Hidden Figures
Grade: B+
Rated PG, mild profanity and thematic elements.
2 hrs., 6 min

Hidden Figures belongs to the feel-good section of Films About Racism, the kind where racism is a problem that can be handled incrementally, with many small victories and bursts of happiness along the way. The violent confrontations and overt hatred that marked many aspects of the Civil Rights movement aren't at play here; instead, it's the ennobling true story of the black women at NASA who helped put white men into space.

The hopeful, this-is-serious-but-it's-going-to-be-OK tone is set early on. Three black women, all math whizzes—mousy genius Katherine Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), fiery Mary Jackson (Janelle Monáe), and matronly Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer)—have car trouble on their way to work at NASA headquarters in Langley, Va., in 1961, drawing the attention of a good ol' boy cop. As he moseys over to their vehicle, we brace ourselves for a heapin' helpin' of harassment. The cop starts to deliver it, too—until he learns they work at NASA. Then his patriotism overrides his racism and he gives them a police escort to work so they won't be late. Not a moment to lose in the race to beat the Russians!

Our trio of friends are computers, a term that in 1961 still referred to humans who add numbers. At NASA, they work in a room designated "colored computers," in a separate building from where the white nerds in skinny neckties work. But none of those white nerds understand analytic geometry (HA HA, DUMMIES!), so the head of their program, Al Harrison (Kevin Costner), goes looking for someone who does. Katherine fits the bill (she's the only one), so she's brought over, making her the only non-white per-



ROTTENTOMATOES

***Hidden Figures* is the incredible untold story of Katherine G. Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer) and Mary Jackson (Janelle Monáe)—brilliant African American women working at NASA, who served as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation's confidence, turned around the Space Race, and galvanized the world. The visionary trio crossed all gender and race lines to inspire generations to dream big.**

son in that department. She still has to run back to her old building to use the bathroom, though, as there are no "colored" restrooms in this one. (The way the film ties up this particular thread is priceless.)

The reactions of Katherine's new co-workers to her presence range from hostile to indifferent, amusingly petty to devastating. One jerk, Stafford (Jim Parsons), refuses to acknowledge her expertise, or even her competence, in anything math-related, setting the stage for either a touching change of heart or a righteous comeuppance. Their boss, Harrison, is racist the way many of his contemporaries were, conditioned not by malice but tradition. His biggest concern is not letting the Russians get to space before we do. If that means working with a black lady, so be it.

Back in the other part of the NASA campus, Mary and Dorothy are forging their own paths. Mary is working with engineers and is knowledgeable enough to be one but lacks the

formal training ... and can't get it, since the only local school offering the necessary courses won't admit blacks. Dorothy, meanwhile, is doing the work of a supervisor, but can't get her prissy, bleary-eyed white boss (Kirsten Dunst) to give her the appropriate pay raise. When Dorothy sees massive new International Business Machines being moved in, hinting that her entire department may soon be obsolete, she starts reading up on Fortran. (She swipes the book from the public library while being kicked out for being black.)

All three women reflect, to varying degrees, the pragmatic attitude of many minorities of the era, swallowing their anger in the face of day-to-day indignities to focus on the bigger picture. Not one of them simply accepts her secondary status, but each fights it differently. Katherine lets her gentle personality and undeniable brilliance speak for her; Mary files petitions and isn't afraid to speak up to a loudmouth (and has a husband

who'd like her to be more militant); Dorothy thinks in practical terms and gets to work quietly training herself to be the best she can be.

The director, Theodore Melfi (*St. Vincent*), wrote the screenplay with Allison Schroeder, adapting Margot Lee Shetterly's nonfiction bestseller. Aiming not to make us feel bad about racism (that's a given) but hopeful about overcoming it and proud of the legitimate advancements we've made, Melfi tells the story with cheerful positivity but not too much flippancy. It's satisfying in the classic Hollywood style, with little triumphs dotting the long road toward equality—little triumphs like hero astronaut John Glenn (Glen Powell) refusing to get into the space capsule until Katherine herself confirms that the calculations are correct (which is evidently true). The film's light, breezy entertainment value hides a deeper poignance, making it a nice complement to the heavier films that take the opposite approach.

Safety Tips

Three Smart Suggestions For Your Self-Defense



PHOTO COURTESY NAPSI

You can learn a lot about self-defense by watching Tom Cruise as action hero Jack Reacher.

(NAPSI)—According to the U.S. Department of Justice, about 20 out of every thousand Americans will be a victim of some kind of assault every year—but you can learn to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Expert Advice

"The best self-defense tip is to always be aware of your surroundings and potential threats so that you don't get into a situation where you actually have to defend yourself when it could possibly be avoided," said Wade Eastwood, 2nd Unit Director/Stunt Coordinator for the action & adventure movie from Paramount *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back*. You don't want to get into a fight if you can help it, but "if it can't be avoided," he added, "then at least you are prepped and ready" if you follow these three Reacher's Rules For Self-Defense.

1. Anything can be a weapon. Keys or a pen can inflict minor damage but after multiple hits can break an enemy down through loss of blood or acute impact strikes. Your voice is also a weapon and can draw help if needed.

2. Hit them fast. If you have to fight, it's critical to injure or immobilize your attacker immediately, and don't get any closer to your attacker than necessary. Kicking the side or front of the knee is a great way to injure and throw your attacker off balance. If you're already close, go for the eyes with your fingers or knuckles. You can also use the heel of your palm to strike up under the nose if your attacker is in front of you, or use your elbow to the nose if the attacker is behind.

3. Hit them hard. Use your entire body weight to hit or break free rather than your individual muscles because your attacker may be stronger. If you kick the knee, throw your whole body into the kick. Same with throwing the heel of your hand into the nose—don't just use your arm, use all your weight.

Again, prevention is the best defense. Attackers want unsuspecting, vulnerable targets. "The Jack Reacher character is always on the lookout for danger and you should be, too," Eastwood advised. "Always expect the worst."

Watch These Moves in the Movie

You can see Tom Cruise as the action hero put these principles into action at home when you get *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back* on Blu-ray, DVD or Digital HD. Check out www.JackReacherMovie.com for more information.

Black History Month from A4

mocrats brought in stakeholders and advocates to ensure that education funding will reach those who need it most in low-income school districts.

"I also pushed hard to make sure that the law included support for the full-service, community schools model, which we've shown here in Maryland to be very successful at closing the achievement gap. The network of full-service, community schools that we created here in Maryland—the Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Education Centers—is named for my wife, Judy.

"She was an early childhood educator and administrator in Prince George's County schools and dedicated her career to closing the achievement gap so that all our children could reach for success. She would be so proud of what we've accomplished together across our state.

"But there is so much more to be done. Not only in opposing a new federal approach under this Administration that seeks to take funding out of our public schools and abandon equity in education—but also in promoting deeper investment in our education system at all levels.

"We need to protect and expand access to higher education through Pell Grants and affordable loans. The jobs and careers of the twenty-first century increasingly require post-secondary degrees. And we need to make sure that our schools are teaching critical steam skills at every level—that's science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics.

"So I'm going to continue working with Ranking Member Scott and with others in the Congressional Black Caucus to fight for policies that promote equal access to quality education and safe, nurturing classrooms where teachers have the resources they need to prepare the next generation for success. And I look forward to continuing our work together here in the Fifth District to do the same."

Introduction of Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, and Congressman Anthony Brown

"It is now my great privilege to introduce three outstanding Maryland legislators who are with us today. We have our two United States Senators, Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen.

"Both are doing a fantastic job of fighting for Marylanders in the United States Senate and standing up for the values we believe in, which are now under assault.

"We also have with us our newest member of Congress from Prince George's County, Rep. Anthony Brown.

"Now, as we say in Congress, I'm going to yield time to them to come up and say a few words. Please join me in welcoming our federal legislators."

Introduction of Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden

"Please, everyone join me once more in thanking Mr. Larry Greenhill for that beautiful performance.

"Now, it is my distinct honor to introduce our keynote speaker.

"On September 14, 2016, Dr. Carla Hayden was sworn in as the fourteenth Librarian of Congress. She is the first African-American to hold that office and the first woman. But she's more than a trailblazer.

"Throughout her life and career, Dr. Hayden has been a powerful advocate for education. In pursuing a career in the library sciences, Dr. Hayden recognizes that libraries and collected knowledge are fundamental to making access to education and opportunity more equal.

"Lady Bird Johnson, former First Lady of the United States, perhaps said it best when she declared: 'No place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.'

"As a librarian, Dr. Hayden's philosophy has been that libraries ought to be gateways to learn-

ing for everyone, both inside and outside the walls of library buildings. That's why she's made it her goal to make more of the Library of Congress's 162 million items available online and to bring innovative programming, including live performances and educational content, to schools around the country.

"And Dr. Hayden comes to her role with a wealth of experience, having previously been CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore and President of the American Library Association. Earlier, she served with the Chicago Public Library System and taught library sciences at the University of Pittsburgh.

"For ten years, she worked in library services at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry—one of the really fantastic science museums in the country.

"Dr. Hayden holds degrees in Library Sciences from Roosevelt University and the University of Chicago.

"Please join me in welcoming her here today as our keynote speaker."

Acknowledgements

"Thank you, Dr. Hayden. We are so blessed to have you with us and to have you as our nation's chief librarian.

"I'm pleased to present you now with a copy of this year's Black History Month poster from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. This year's poster features artwork created by students from Suitland High School in conjunction with the Prince George's County Parks and Recreation Department. It depicts a history of black sacred music traditions.

"Before I turn the floor over to Ms. Ivana Alexander to lead us in 'Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing,' I want to take a moment and acknowledge some special individuals who are with us. We

heard from Dr. Hayden, Sen. Cardin, Sen. Van Hollen, and Rep. Brown. I want to thank all of them again for taking the time to be with us today for this celebration.

"I also want to thank Betty Richardson and the entire Planning Committee.

"Please also give a hand to Cheverly City Councilwoman Maurielle Stewart, who emceed this morning's program. She used to work in my Congressional office, and it's been wonderful watching her continue serving the people of our District in a number of different capacities.

"Our musical performers: Ms. Ivana Alexander, Mr. Larry Greenhill, and the sounds of Joshua Community Praise Choir—please give them a round of applause. They brought such wonderful spirit to the day's celebration.

"And our clergy—Rev. Frazier and Rev. Swanson. Thank you for adding to our experience of this day.

"And to the students at High Point High School who carried our nation's colors—thank you for your patriotism and your hard work in school and in the community.

"I also want to mention someone else who is here today: my good friend Chuck Lewis. Chuck has been a leader and role model in the community for many, many years. Though he retired from the government printing office and has since moved down to North Carolina, he still comes back every year for our Black History Breakfast and maintains very strong ties throughout the community. Thank you, Chuck.

"And thanks to everyone who is here today not only to celebrate Black History Month but to continue writing the story of black history together here in Maryland. I'm proud to serve you in the Congress, and I look forward to continuing our work together in the months and years ahead as we seek to make our union a more perfect one. Thank you."

Calendar of Events

February 23 — March 1, 2017

Black History Hall of Fame

Date and Time: Thursday, February 23, 2017, 10:15 am and 12 noon
Description: Join us in this fast-paced adventure and meet over a dozen important African Americans who have made significant contributions in shaping our nation's past, present and future. Maya Angelou, Aretha Franklin, the Buffalo Soldiers and Mae Jemison are just a few of the hall-of-famers in this interactive performance that makes Black History come alive.
Cost: \$8/person; \$6/groups of 20 or more
Ages: Recommended for Grades Pre-K-5
Location: Publick Playhouse
5445 Landover Rd., Cheverly, MD
Contact: 301-277-1710; TTY 301-699-2544

Platinum Live: A Black History Month Gospel Celebration

Date and Time: Friday, February 24, 2017, 11 am
Description: Attend this Black History Month Gospel Celebration featuring Washington D.C.'s own Pink PaLiSh.
Cost: \$10/person
Ages: 60 & better
Location: Publick Playhouse
5445 Landover Rd, Cheverly, MD
Contact: 301-277-1710; TTY 301-699-2544

Starpower Talent Competition

Date and Time: Friday, February 24, 2017 6 pm-8:30 pm
Description: Join us for the second day of this exciting dance competition featuring some of the most talented performers of all ages from coast to coast. The final day of this competition is Sunday, February 26, 8 am-4:30 pm.
Cost: Free for Spectators
Location: The Show Place Arena
14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, MD
Contact: 301-952-7900; TTY 301-699-2255

Step/Cheer Dance Show

Date and Time: Friday, February 24, 2017, 7-9 pm
Description: Enjoy the annual step, cheer and dance show! Local colleges' cheer squads and step teams will perform.
Cost: Free
Ages: All ages
Location: Potomac Landing Community Center
12500 Fort Washington Road, Fort Washington, MD
Contact: 301-292-9191; TTY 301-699-2544

Arts Drop-In: Popsicle Stick Puppets

Date and Time: Saturday, February 25, 2017, 10 am-12 noon
Description: Arts Drop-In with Aaron Springer is a fun time for kids and parents to get creative with a variety of craft materials and an imaginative facilitator.
Cost: FREE
Ages: 2-10 years old
Location: College Park Community Center
5051 Pierce Avenue, College Park, MD
Contact: 301-441-2647; TTY 301-699-2544

The Queens Royal Court Girl's Empowerment Day

Date and Time: Sunday, February 25, 2017, 11 am-5 pm
Description: Get ready to be empowered, entertained and inspired at the second annual Queens Royal Court. Activities include team building, workshops, a walk on the red carpet, and others. Lunch will be catered.
Cost: Resident \$10; Non-Resident \$12
Ages: 10-17
Location: Fort Washington Community Center
1200 Filmore Road, Fort Washington, MD
Contact: 301-292-4300; TTY 301-699-2544

Harlem Nights

Date and Time: Saturday, February 25, 2016, 6-8 pm
Description: Bring out the entire family to celebrate the rich history of the Harlem Renaissance. Come out and support our youth as they showcase talents from singing and dancing, to poetry and drama. The spirit of the Harlem Renaissance is alive and well!
Cost: FREE
Ages: All Ages
Location: Vansville School Community Center
6813 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, MD
Contact: 301-937-6621; TTY 301-937-6621

Xtreme Teens: Movie/Pizza Night

Date and Time: Saturday, February 25, 2017, 7-10 pm
Description: Come out and join us for a night of relaxation. Enjoy watching the latest movies, eating pizza, and hanging with friends.
Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
Ages: 10-17
Location: Langley Park Community Center
1500 Merrimac Drive, Hyattsville, MD
Contact: 301-445-4508; TTY 301-699-2455

Bob Brown Puppets: Jellybean Circus

Date and Time: Thursday, March 2, 2017, 9:30 am and 11:15 am
Description: The Jumping Jellybeans are the stars of Bob Brown's puppet circus, with friendly bears, adorable elephants, wacky goony birds and their hilarious pals entertaining kids with tumbling, tricks, and lots more circus fun.
Cost: \$5/person
Ages: Recommended for Grades Pre-K-2
Location: Publick Playhouse
5445 Landover Rd, Cheverly, MD
Contact: 301-277-1710; TTY 301-699-2544

EARTH TALK ... Cleantech: Still the Next Big Thing for American Venture Capitalists?

Dear EarthTalk:

Is alternative energy still the next big thing for American venture capitalists?

—Jeffrey Moss,
Fairfield, CT

A decade ago, in the wake of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* and rising gas/oil prices, many of the same venture capitalists (VCs) who had made fortunes betting on software, hardware, Internet and biotech start-ups began shifting significant chunks of their investment dollars over to alternative renewable energy and related investments, putting the so-called "cleantech" sector in the spotlight as the "new new thing." Given growing global concern about greenhouse gas emissions and other pollution, it made sense that our highest stakes investors would be attracted to placing big bets on little companies jockeying to be the next major players in the fast growing alternative energy sector.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the next round of initial public offerings (IPOs): the cleantech bubble burst. According to a July 2016 report from the MIT Energy Initiative, some three dozen U.S. venture capital firms poured some \$25 billion in cleantech start-ups between 2006 and 2011—and lost over half their money: "The results are stark—cleantech offered a dismal risk/return profile, dragged down

by companies developing new materials, chemistries or processes that never achieved manufacturing scale."

The MIT researchers studied the performance of hundreds of cleantech investments and compared the results against medical and software technology investments over the same six-year period. Their conclusion? "The VC model is broken for the cleantech sector, which suffers especially from a dearth of large corporations willing to invest in innovation."

So where did cleantech go wrong? Unlucky timing may have had something to do with it, given the overall market collapse at the end of 2008. But the MIT researchers point out that cleantech start-ups have a longer timeframe of growth than, say, software ventures—and VCs don't want to wait around for 15-20 years to cash in on their bets. Also, the cleantech sector suffers from underdeveloped supply chains and an "immature acquisition space" compared to more conventional tech startups.

The result is that most of the 150 renewable energy start-ups launched in Silicon Valley since 2006 are long gone. The flame-out of high-flying solar tube manufacturer Solyndra—after securing \$500 million in federal loan guarantees—undermined investor confidence in cleantech, while cheap natural gas and a glut of Chinese solar panel exports undercut the competitiveness of American start-ups in the sector.



CREDIT: JEFF KUBINA, FLICKRCC

Cleantech start-ups have floundered recently after an initial wave of investment a decade ago. But renewed interest in the space thanks to the Paris climate accord has re-energized innovation and attracted the attention of some well-known, deep-pocketed venture capital investors.

But cleantech's fortunes may be turning around, given an influx of interest in leveraging technology and efficiency to help the U.S. meet its emissions reduction commitments under the Paris Climate Accord. Just prior to the landmark December 2015 Paris meeting, Bill Gates announced he was launching a new venture fund, the Breakthrough Energy Coalition—with a little help from 27 mega-rich friends like Jeff Bezos, Richard Branson and Mark Zuckerberg. The nascent billion dollar fund is focused on "fighting climate change by investing in clean energy innovation" and represents a new type of venture financing that aims to not only make money but to help solve

social and environmental problems as well. Gates and company are optimistic that other funders will follow in their footsteps to re-energize American cleantech innovation, create millions of new domestic green jobs, and help finally move us beyond fossil fuels.

CONTACTS: MIT Energy Initiative, energy.mit.edu; Breakthrough Energy Coalition, www.b-t.energy.com.

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Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

Solitary from A3

percent of juvenile detention centers locked youth in solitary confinement for more than four hours at a time, and some held youth for up to 23 hours a day with no human interaction.

When subjected to solitary confinement, adolescents are often denied access to treatment and programming that would meet their psychological, developmental, and rehabilitative needs. Because youths are still developing, solitary confinement often seriously harms their mental and physical health, as well as their development.

The Maintaining Dignity and Eliminating Unnecessary Restrictive

Confinement of Youths Act (MERCY Act):

• **Bans Juvenile Solitary Confinement.** The MERCY Act bans the use of "room confinement" in juvenile facilities, except as a temporary response to a behavioral issue that poses serious and immediate risk to any individual.

• **Requires Use of Less Restrictive Techniques.** The bill ensures that before a juvenile is placed in room confinement, the staff member must use less restrictive techniques, including de-escalation techniques or discussions with a qualified mental health professional.

• **Encourages Transparency.** The bill mandates that the juve-

nile be informed of why the room confinement placement occurred and that release will occur upon regaining self-control or after a certain period of time in solitary confinement. It also requires that the juvenile's attorney and parents be notified when certain actions are taken.

• **Places Time Limits on Usage of Confinement.** The MERCY Act limits solitary confinement on juveniles that pose a risk of harming others to no more than 3 hours and to juveniles who pose a risk of harm to themselves to no more than half an hour. It requires that juveniles be removed from room confinement once the risk of harm subsides.

• **Sets Minimum Conditions of Confinement.** The bill ensures that the room used for room confinement in exceptional circumstances have adequate space, lighting, heating, cooling, ventilation, and access to water, toilet facilities, and hygiene supplies.

• **Requires Post-Confinement Services.** After the maximum period of confinement, the bill mandates that juveniles be transferred to a facility where services can be provided.

• **Requires an Analysis.** The MERCY Act requires that the Attorney General submit a detailed report to Congress on uses of force, restraints, and room confinement for juveniles.

Body Camera from A5

Charles Wellford, former criminology department head at the University of Maryland, concurred. "Instituting body cameras almost always has an impact in reduced number of complaints," he said.

However, Wellford also pointed to a recent study by Cambridge University that revealed two surprising new findings: Rates of assault against police officers wearing body cameras increased 15 percent compared to those without them; and if officers have discretion about when to activate body cameras, use-of-force incidents rise by more than 70 percent.

"We're trying to engineer the decision process [for activating cameras]," said Acosta, who was only willing to share parts of the PGPD body camera policy with Capital News Service because it was still being negotiated with the county's lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police.

When the policy is finally released, it will be closely scrutinized by community and civil rights groups.

"The policy must give enough direction to officers so the public can be assured," said David Rocah, an attorney with the ACLU of Maryland. "But it must also be clear enough that it can be enforced when cops don't follow it."

Rocah also knocked the PGPD for failing to offer the policy for public review and comment before it goes into effect, as Baltimore County did.

Essentially PGPD officers must turn on their cameras when they are dispatched on a call or at "... the initiation of any proactive enforcement action." Officers may also "... use BWCs to record initial interviews of victims, complainants and witnesses[.]" according to portions of the draft policy shared by Acosta.

PGPD officers will also be able to review footage of incidents where their actions are under investigation before making

statements or writing reports—an issue that was contentious when Baltimore County's policy was negotiated. In Baltimore City, the working group assembled by then-Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake to make recommendations for the city's body camera policy did not favor officers reviewing their footage in "non-routine" incidents, though Baltimore's policy ultimately allowed it.

"[Officers reviewing footage] destroys the integrity of an investigation," Rocah said. "It wouldn't happen in almost any other context and is really a way police officers are treated differently from others."

John "Zeek" Teletchea, president of the Prince George's County Fraternal Order of Police, disagreed.

"Our position is that officers should be able to review cam footage, especially in cases of criminal incidents," he said. "It's been proven that immediately after an incident, you don't have the ability to recount it perfectly. It only helps the officer and

agency to compile a complete account of what happened."

Teletchea is also concerned about protecting the privacy of police officers.

"When not doing official functions as a police officer, that video should in no way, shape or form come back to them as discipline for behavior that may not be appropriate for the workplace," he said.

The Cost of Transparency

"At the end of the day, we're going to spend X amount of dollars ... What did we accomplish? Are we changing behavior?" Acosta asked, explaining how the PGPD program will be judged.

"We know that complaints go down," said Wellford, who has worked with more than 20 police departments, including the PGPD. "But we don't know why. Is it the officer that changes or the citizen?"

If Acosta is right, it's both. If he's wrong, the public and the department will find out soon enough.

Homeless from A5

so, such as Laundromats, where homeless people can find new clothing or replace some of their existing clothing from the discards. Homeless youth rely on basketball courts for low-cost social interaction with their peers, according to Summerlot.

The once-homeless teen is a youth ambassador with Social Services and a part of the newly formed Youth Advisory Board.

Reaching out to younger homeless people and providing them with a community, according to the 18-year-old, is one of the benefits outreach programs and shelters provide. "When I

was homeless, I was super alone," he said.

Summerlot thinks it is important for people to know, "it's not just a social services issue ... it's connected to a lot of other issues," like affordable housing, living wage jobs, appropriate and affordable health and mental health services. "There are a lot of ways that

individuals can experience a crisis that ends up with them sleeping in a car or being unstably housed."

For the homeless in suburban areas, their lack of visibility can work against those trying to help them. "We don't need to make them more visible, we need to make them feel like they are not invisible," the teen said.

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